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SUBJECT: INVITATION FOR SOUTH EAST EUROPE NATIONS TO
WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL APPROACH TO STOCKPILE REDUCTION

REF: A. 2008 CDRUSEUCOM 12010907

[1](#)B. STATE 2919

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraphs 6-8.

[1](#)2. Summary and Action Request. The idea for a regional approach to the common challenge of excess munitions disposal first emerged at the September 2008 Adriatic Charter Chiefs of Defense Conference. Recognizing the benefits of continued regional dialogue and coordination on this issue, the Department of State will host a workshop on November 3-5, 2009 in Budva, Montenegro aimed at continuing the &Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction8 (RASR) in South East Europe which began in May of 2009. Posts are requested to extend invitations to host governments. End Summary.

BACKGROUND

[1](#)3. (U) South East European countries have aging, excess, and unstable stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions. These stockpiles pose dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion. These threats could cause humanitarian disasters and/or destabilize individual countries or the region as a whole. Since 2006, ammunition stockpile explosions in Albania, Bulgaria, and Serbia have caused large numbers of casualties and significant damage, displacing many civilians.

[1](#)4. (U) At the September 2008 Adriatic Charter Chiefs of Defense Conference, the Montenegro CHOD suggested a regional approach to the common challenges of excess munitions disposal. U.S. European Command (EUCOM) agreed, believing that the Department of State should help create a forum where the governments of South East Europe could develop regional plans to address problems associated with excess and unstable stockpiles (ref A).

[1](#)5. (U) The Department of state supported EUCOM,s proposal and organized a workshop on the reduction of stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions in Zagreb, Croatia on May of 2009 (ref B). The workshop being held in November, 2009 will continue the proactive and coordinated regional approach for addressing the destabilizing threats posed by excess, unstable, and loosely secured stockpiles of conventional weapons and munitions in South East Europe which was begun in May, 2009. We seek to foster relationships between senior General Staff and MOD officials from the region so that they can periodically share information, advice, and lessons learned, as well as improve coordination in efforts, when and

where appropriate, to reduce and destroy stockpiles.

OBJECTIVES/ACTION REQUEST

¶16. (U) Posts are requested to undertake the following:

-- Extend invitation to the host nation MOD and General Staff on Embassy letterhead, using the text in para 9 and providing the concept paper, administrative details, and workshop registration form that will be sent via email. Foreign Ministries should be provided copies. The workshop agenda will be sent via email on October 2 with a reminder for participants to make hotel reservations and to submit workshop registration form by October 7.

-- Coordinate with host government to determine which three host nation officials will attend the workshop. While the MOD and General Staff should each send one representative, a third representative may come from any government agency the host nation interlocutors believe appropriate. The ideal invitees will have responsibility for stockpile management and reduction policy, as well as the ability to discuss these issues in English. If governments, workshop participants do not speak English, inform them that simultaneous translation will be provided.

-- Ask host government officials to consider and be prepared to discuss their national priorities for action in each of the five issue areas on the agenda (see paragraph 4).

-- Encourage participants to register for the workshop as soon as possible, and to plan on arriving in Budva, Montenegro in time to attend the opening reception on Tuesday evening, November 3.

-- Inform participants that they must pay for their travel and lodging. The USG will cover all administrative costs of the workshop (workshop venue, technical support, coffee breaks and working lunches, and the icebreaker reception).

¶17. (U) During the RASR initiative,s inaugural Zagreb workshop in May 2009, participants identified the following five issue areas where the RASR can facilitate greater coordination among actors involved in conventional-weapons reduction: national and regional policy; infrastructure; training, education, and building related capacity; sharing information and best practices; and standardization. The agenda for this Budva workshop will examine practical steps to be taken in these five areas. Embassies are requested to invite host nation representatives attending the seminar to consider and be prepared to discuss their national priorities for action in each of the five issue areas.

¶18. (U) Embassy Podgorica is requested to invite representatives from the Government of Montenegro to make brief opening remarks and to give a 15-20 minute presentation in English regarding its policies and plans for stockpile security and reduction. The opening remarks will occur on the morning of November 4 after the US Ambassador,s welcome. The presentation will be given during the working lunch on the same day.

TEXT OF OFFICIAL INVITATION

¶19. (U) On behalf of the Government of the United States, the U.S. embassy wishes to invite up to three representatives from the Government of (SPECIFY COUNTRY) to a workshop in support of the South East Europe Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR). Hosted by the U.S. Department of State in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense, the RASR workshop will be held on November 4 and 5, 2009 in Budva, Montenegro at Hotel Avala. The purpose of the workshop is to facilitate a regional approach to the reduction of excess, unstable, and loosely secured conventional weapons and munitions, which pose significant security and humanitarian threats to the countries of South East Europe. The idea for a regional approach to the common problem of unstable and unsecure stockpiles emerged at the September

2008 Adriatic Charter Chiefs of Defense Conference. Inspired by this idea, this initiative will build on the success of the inaugural RASR workshop in Zagreb by next focusing on identifying practical and concrete national and regional plans for stockpile reduction and management. The workshop will give Defense Ministry and General Staff officials involved in stockpile management an opportunity to build relationships with their counterparts in the region, share best practices and lessons learned, develop regional stockpile reduction efforts, and coordinate when and where appropriate. They will also learn about technical and financial assistance available to help them meet their stockpile reduction goals.

Governments are invited to send three representatives to the workshop, which will include an opening reception on the evening of November 3 and working lunches on November 4 and 5. To reserve your place at the workshop, please fill out the attached registration form and submit it by fax or email to Brandon Sternquist at the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement by October 7, 2009. Please make your reservation at Hotel Avala (Dijana Kustudic, 382 (0)33 441 554 (tel), conference@avalaresort.com) by October 7, 2009. When making a reservation, please mention that you will be attending the RASR workshop. The workshop presentations and discussions will be in English and simultaneous translation will be provided. Questions and faxes related to the workshop should be directed to Brandon Sternquist, U.S. Department of State, at sternquistbs@state.gov, 1 202-663-0091 (tel), 1 202-663-0090 (fax).

END INVITATION
CLINTON